



Mayor's column July 3, 2014

The Positive Impact of Recycling

As I am out in the community one of the questions I am frequently asked is about recycling. Citizens want more opportunities to recycle and to cut down on the litter in our community. Gallatin has taken several steps to provide recycling opportunities.

The city has a full recycling center on Long Hollow Pike at our service center. You can recycle glass, cans, newspapers, magazines, cardboard, and all kinds of plastic. You can also take recyclables to the Resource Authority on Steam Plant road. Recycling is good for the environment and it saves the city money by not having to pick up plastic bottles and cans on the roadside. Did you know that the average American generates about 4.3 pounds of garbage a day which equates to nearly 1,600 pounds per year? Some of that garbage ends up along our highways and byways here in Gallatin. It detracts from our community and is bad for the environment.

The State of Tennessee has implemented a litter grant program to help community's combat litter and educate the public on the value of recycling. Gallatin was awarded a three year grant to pay for a litter crew consisting of a crew leader, recycling bins, and public education on recycling. The crew will work six months of the year from April to September. The crew leader is assigned two inmates from the Sumner County Jail which keeps the cost of the grant down. It is an 80/20 grant with the city's share \$14,000 and the state's share \$70,000.

From May 19 through June 27, the City's new litter crew picked up 4,200 pounds of trash along our roads. That is more than two tons of trash picked up in 30 working days along our beautiful streets and roadsides. At this rate the crew may end up collecting more than 18,000 pounds of garbage – or 9 tons – by the end of summer.

The grant requires an education component to make the public more aware of recycling and its benefits. To provide more opportunities to recycle, Gallatin has added a Big Belly solar-powered recycling bin (paid for by the grant) downtown where anyone can deposit plastic bottles. The bin was put downtown primarily because of the monthly free concert series, 3rd Thursday on Main that attracts hundreds of people many of whom dine outside. The city also has new portable recycling bins that are being set up at other public events—either downtown or in our parks.

Litter impacts our community in an undesirable way. Recycling impacts our community in a very positive way. The next time you see someone thinking of littering please encourage them to use trash cans or to recycle the items they are disposing of. Proper disposal makes our community more attractive and saves citizens money by not having to pay someone to pick up the litter. Let's keep Gallatin beautiful and an attractive place to live, work, play, and raise a family.